



“Tandem”

IO1: INTERACTIVE MAP OF LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES AND SKILLS

Outcomes of the roundtable with stakeholders on language diversity in Greece



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Introduction:

This document is a summary of a roundtable with stakeholders, held in April/May 2020, on the linguistic diversity in the partner countries of the TANDEM project. For more information about the project, please consult the project's website: www.teachyourlanguage.eu.

Who participates to the roundtable (Short description & Profession)?

It was very difficult to get people together due to COVID-19, schools, NGOs and all collective activities were suspended from March 9th, 2020 in Greece.

We organized the discussion by sending the questionnaire to trainers and stakeholders and then we had a telephone discussion. We were able to contact and discuss the topic with:

1. S. A (Doctor /interpreter /trainer /cultural mediator from Pakistan living in Greece for the last 10 years)
2. M.M (teacher in public high school, teaches Greek language to migrants)
3. R.A trainer /cultural mediator for DRC, he is from Iran leaving in Greece the last three years, speaks Farsi, English and Greek
4. K. K Researcher and director of training department in an NGO in Greece-ELIX

A.D. conducted the discussion, she has long experience on migration issues as researcher, trainer and mentor.

Round table topics

Main trends: National and Local (or regional) level

All participants agreed that the number of immigrants in Greece reaches a million. Of course, immigration that took place in earlier years has been in a way integrated into society. The immigrants who arrived after 2015 and are almost 100.000 people are the ones that most of the trainers and the stakeholders are dealing now. Most of the immigrants arriving since 2015 are from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Sub Saharan countries.

Although there is few information about the language background of refugees, as one would expect, there is an abundance of languages spoken amongst the different minority ethnicity groups. Albanians have the highest rate (65% of the migrant population of Greece are Albanians followed by Bulgarian. Most of the people we interviewed had worked with people speaking Albanian, Arabic, Farsi, Dari, Kurmanji, Swahili, Turkish, Sorani, Bengali, Urdu, Tigrinya, Chinese, Georgian, Russian, Lingala, Bambara, Igbo, Yoruba.

About the level of language of the immigrants the participants did not have a very clear idea, they expressed the general comment that most of the people who were stuck in Greece after 2016 closing of the European borders are very low qualified, most of

them have finished just a few classes of basic schooling and speak a few words of English. There are some exemptions from young people from Iran who are well educated. Also, many women from Pakistan, Afghanistan and the sub-Saharan countries never attended school.

During 2015-2016 a million of people passed through Greece to other European countries, at that time Greece did not get the advantage to host and keep people who were young and educated who are needed for our country but they went to Germany. Now the people who are left behind are old, without schooling at all and unfortunately because of the system they have become institutionalized expecting everything from the Greek State and the European Union.

Most of them are not interested to learn the language because they do not want to stay in Greece, their eyes are in Northern Europe, United States and Canada where they believe that they will have a brighter future, they do not understand that will be very difficult to leave and do not get starting with learning the language.

All participants agreed that there are not employment opportunities for these people in Greece, and since there are not state-run projects to learn the language will be very difficult for them. NGOs and volunteer organizations provide language courses but are not enough spaces.

Language Learning opportunities for migrants and Low Qualified Adults

Participants identified Greek and English as the two most important languages at work and also an important condition for getting work. Depending on the field of work Arabic and Russian are important too especially for the tourism sector. They did not know where immigrants could go to learn the Greek language, in general they mentioned that NGOs provide Greek language courses .One of them knew about the courses provided by the National & Kapodistrian University of Athens - Modern Greek Language Teach Center .

About the language learning between low qualified locals and immigrants they believe that can have good results. One of the teachers mentioned a similar project that is taking place with an Iranian group who have an open space in Athens and they exchange language courses, they teach Farsi to Greeks and to people from other countries and Greeks teach them Greek.

R.A. who is a member of the Iranian group believes that its important for immigrant communities to share their culture and values in the hosting community. Of course, he mentioned that its necessary to have a basic understanding of a common language in order to teach each other.

Digital skills and language learning

All participants agreed that digital skills are particularly important to learn a new language. They can use the searching engines, dictionaries etc. The students who use digital equipment learn easier one participant mentioned. There are many platforms that students and teachers can use.

Intercultural skills and language learning

All participants agreed that language and culture is interrelated.

- If you learn a language you get to know the culture also.
- People who get involved in culture and open learn the language easier.

